MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

ENVIRONMENTAL FACILITIES PERMITTING UNIT

FOR THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Application of Xcel Energy and Great River Energy for a Route Permit for the Upgrade of the Southwest Twin Cities Chaska Area 69 kV Transmission Line to 115 kV Capacity

MPUC DOCKET NO. E002/TL-12-401

Chaska City Hall
Council Chambers
One City Hall Plaza
Chaska, Minnesota

Met, pursuant to notice, at 2:00 in the afternoon on September 26, 2012.

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MR. STORM: Okay. Folks, if we can take our seats. Okay. My name is Bill Storm with the Department of Commerce Energy Facility Permitting Unit. We are a unit inside the Department of Commerce who facilitates the routing and siting process for large transmission projects for the Public Utilities Commission. Tonight we're here to inform the public of the project, the Southwest Twin Cities Chaska area project, which is a project by Xcel and GRE to upgrade the existing 69 kV line to a 115 line.

There are two dockets associated with this project. The first docket is a certificate of need docket where the Applicant must show to the PUC that the need exists and that the solution to the need that is best suited for the ratepayers in Minnesota is the rebuilding of the 169 -- or the 69 kV line.

The second docket, which is a routing docket, is a docket in which we evaluate the routes for where the transmission line should go. And in this case Xcel and GRE are presenting it as a rebuild of a 69 kV line and their route that they propose is to follow the existing 69 kV line.

I just want to go over a little bit

tonight of what tonight's agenda is going to be. Before I do that, I want to point out some things that are on the front table, some handouts for the public. The first handout is a fact sheet on rights-of-way and easement acquiring, the process that they go through to acquire an easement for a right-of-way. This process, the process of acquiring easement and compensation for easement, is outside of the process for either CN or the routing docket. Acquiring of the easement occurs after, if and when they are issued a certificate of need and a route permit. But this is the fact sheet that explains a little bit of that information and where you can go to get more information on that topic.

The other thing on the front table was just a copy of the notice. One thing I do want to point out in the copy of the notice, tonight we're here; it's a public information and scoping meeting. The informational part is to tell the public about the project and to tell the public about the process.

The scoping portion of the meeting is to take input from the public on what issues that you are concerned with that you want to make sure I cover in my environmental document and, also, if you

want to put forth an alternative route. If you think there's a better solution than rebuilding the 69 along that same right-of-way, this and the comment period following this would be your opportunity to do that. The comment period for this project extends to October 12th, and I'll cover that again later on.

As I said, I'm Bill Storm with the Department of Commerce. Mike Kaluzniak is with the PUC staff. Mike is also the public advisor on this project. So if you have questions about the process, how to participate, or you need assistance in participating, Mike is the person to see for that. And you can always call me too, but Mike is the assigned public advisor for this project. His contact information is on this notice.

Then you also see the contact information for the utility, Xcel Energy, also on this notice. And Xcel will be giving a presentation tonight.

My business card's also on the table. So if you need to contact me, email or phone, that information is there. Our snail mail address is there too.

If you know you want to speak tonight, if you have an issue that you want to make sure gets on

the record or concern, I ask that you fill out one of these (indicating) cards back on the table, and slip it to either Mike or myself tonight. And at the end of the presentation, we will allow the members of the public to ask either myself, Mike, or the Applicants questions. So -- and if nobody signs cards, I will still ask for a show of hands at the end and ask people if they want to speak.

Some people aren't comfortable speaking in a public forum, so I have set up a comment sheet. If you know you have an issue that you want me to cover in the environmental assessment or you know of a concern that you have, whether you're interested in EMF or other issues that may be surrounding the building of this transmission line, you can put the comments on here. Leave this with me or Mike or drop it in the mail to us.

There's a signup sheet. If right now those people who have gotten notice about this project, either landowners or people in the -- who are on a general list, after tonight if you're not on my project contact list, you won't get notice. So if you want to get notice from here on of when the environmental document comes out or when the public hearing's going to be, I ask that you sign up

to get on my project contact list.

A copy of the slides (indicating) so you can follow along with tonight's presentation. You can write your questions down on the sides for asking at the end.

And then the other thing is a draft scoping document. As I said, one of the reasons we're here tonight is to scope the environmental document; what issues or what alternatives would you like me to contain or include in my environmental assessment that I'm going to write. This document explains that scoping process and also lays out the boilerplate or the standard items that I know I'm going to include in my document up front. But if you have a specific concern, this is your opportunity and the comment period that follows is your opportunity to make sure that I'm aware of it so that I cover it in the environmental document.

Xcel Energy and GRE will give a presentation on what the project is and the pieces and parts of the project. When they are done, the floor will come back to me; and then I'll run you through the process, the regulatory process of how we review the application for the CN and the application for a route. And then when I'm done, I

will turn it over to the public and ask -- give you an opportunity to ask questions on the record of Xcel, GRE, myself, or Mike.

We do have a court reporter here. So when we get to that session where I ask for your public comments, I ask that you stand up, state and spell your name clearly, and then ask your question. I also ask that one person at a time, because that will help the court reporter.

The next is Xcel's comment, presentation. Sage Tauber --

MS. TAUBER: Tauber, yep.

MR. STORM: -- is going to start that off. So I'll turn it over to Sage.

MS. TAUBER: Thanks. Good afternoon, everyone. Thanks for coming. My name is Sage Tauber. I'm a permit analyst with Xcel Energy. I'm working on the route permit application for this project. We're coapplicants with Great River Energy, who owns and operates a small portion of this project, which I'll explain in a moment.

So I'll be going through a brief explanation, overview of the project; and then Paul Lehman from our regulatory department with Xcel Energy will give a brief discussion about the need

behind the project and talk a little bit more about why we're proposing this project.

As you can see in the front of the room, we have maps of the route, which is divided essentially into six segments. The total project covers just under 13 miles, and it starts here on the right side -- my right-hand side here of the room on the furthest west just west of Aue Lake, and the project extends eastward and ends at the Scott County Substation with various segments in between there, which I'll be explaining.

The first component of the project involves approximately 6 miles of upgrading the existing 69-kilovolt line to 115 kilovolt. These are described in Segments 1, 4, and 6 of the project. Total about 6 miles. And as Bill described, we're upgrading the voltage of this line, which essentially will be a complete replacement, removing and replacing the poles and the wires that are there for those segments. And essentially the same alignments of where that 69 kV line is currently located.

The second component of the project involves simply changing the voltage of an approximately three-mile segment of line. This is

the segment that is owned and operated by Great River Energy. This segment extends from the intersection of County Road 40 and -- 140 and Guernsey Avenue. It runs north and south through the Victoria substation. This segment of the project involves simply changing the voltage. There are no changes -- physical changes to the structures that are existing there. They're wood poles, which would remain in place. In order to change the voltage from 69 kV to 115 kV, the switch structure at the southern intersection of those lines would be replaced and upgraded to operate at 115.

Another component of the project involves constructing two new segments of 115 kV transmission line, totaling about two-and-a-half miles. The first portion of that rebuild -- or the new construction, rather, is located -- switch the map here for a moment -- in red here (indicating). You can see the pointer. It's approximately 1.8 miles that follows the west side of Highway 212, follows along Creek Road, Engler Boulevard, and heads north to the newly-constructed city of Chaska West Creek Substation.

The other segment of new 115 kV lines is located in the city of Chaska. It's about a little

over half a mile of new 115 kV line, which would replace the existing 69 kV line, which is located -- or which is shown here in the gray. So again shown in red would be the new construction.

Another component of the project involves abandoning approximately one mile of existing kV line. This is shown here in between two of the segments I described previously in orange, which are the rebuild section. This segment of line here (indicating) shown in gray, from this point here to intersection of 140 and Highway 12, would be abandoned in place. Essentially the poles would remain where they're currently located, but the line would not be electrified.

The last component of the project involves modifying three of the substations along the proposed route. The first modification would be the Augusta Substation, which is the furthest west here, located right here (indicating), would involve constructing a -- or installing a new transformer.

Similarly, the Victoria Substation, no change to the existing footprint or the size of those that would occur on this project.

And then at the eastern terminus of the project at the Scott County Substation would involve

an expansion there, all on Xcel Energy's property. But that would be expanded to include the new equipment to facilitate the upgrade voltage to 115.

Again, we have -- this route map is larger and easier to see in the back of the room, and then more details on these route maps we have in the front of the room. So we'd be happy to look at more segments of the route that you may be interested in.

Now I'd like to turn it to over to Paul Lehman, who will talk a little more about the need for this project and why Xcel Energy is moving to do this upgrade.

MR. LEHMAN: Good afternoon. As Sage said, I'm Paul Lehman. I'm a regulatory manager with Xcel Energy, and my role is to work through the permitting of this project that involves demonstrating that we, in fact, need to do something and that we have the solution identified for that. That is the project that we're talking about this afternoon.

So let's just talk about this in here. We're -- we've come forward and said we need to develop this project, and we need to do that so that we can continue to reliably serve our customers.

That's of utmost importance of Xcel Energy and Great River Energy is to make sure we can maintain reliable service to our customers.

And the reason we see that we need to do that is because there's growing demand for electricity in this area and, as that demand grows, the capabilities of the system reached their limits. So we're seeing that we need to take care of that. And then we also see the significant new load that's taking place at the data center that's being developed out to the west of us, west of the city here.

And if we were to do nothing, that growing demand of our customers for electricity would cause the lines that serve -- the transmission line in particular we're talking about -- to overload and potentially to have what we call low voltages on the transmission. Let me explain those a little bit more.

If you take a look at this picture here (indicating), that shows you how the power, the electricity that our customers are using flows on the transmission line that we're talking about. As you can see, that Sage was talking, we have input points to the transmission line on the east that's

the Scott County Substation. That's where the power comes from the other higher-voltage lines that are feeding into this area, and it delivers power into the area to take care of the customer needs.

Also -- we also get power out of a transmission source to the far west, and that happens to be a Carver County Substation. So that power comes out of those two locations and heads into this Augusta/Victoria/Chaska system of customer requirements. So this shows you where the power's coming from. Roughly half of it comes from the east and half of it comes from the west.

So what is it that we're worried about? What do we want to make sure that we come up with a solution to prevent problems? One is this concept that I've talked about called overloading, and overloading is pretty straightforward. What it means is that the power that the transmission lines are being asked to carry is more than the transmission lines are capable of carrying. All of our transmission lines have limits on how much power they can carry; and when we reach those limits, we're at risk of the lines overloading and damage to those transmission lines actually occurring.

As a complement to that, there's also a

problem known as low-voltage conditions. And what happens there is that, again, while the line may not have actually overloaded but we still try to send too much power down the line, and by the time it get to the end of the line, the ability for the customers to use our power is degraded through the voltage dropping down below an acceptable level. And when that happens, there's a risk that the customer's equipment could, in fact, be damaged. So both those problems, the overloading of our facilities and the low voltage that we can deliver to our customers, causes our system to not be able to reliably meet the needs of our customers.

So here's an example of what happens. As I said, we've got two sources of power that come to this -- customer loads in this area, one from the east and one from the west. So this shows you what happens if the line that comes out of that Scott County Substation that's on the east side of the area here is out of service for whatever reason. If that's the case, then all of the power that has to be used or this customer's need to use in this area has to come from the west over that transmission line. And as you can see here, we're showing overloads. The loading of a line gets above its

capability, either -- we put it in terms of percentage. So we see that we go as high as 120 percent loading. Now that's a significant risk to the lines being able to actually carry that amount of power and the risk of being damaged. So we don't want to have that situation occur, so we see this as a problem we need to solve.

As you can see also, the voltage -- the voltage here shows that ideally we'd want to stay pretty close to 100 percent of the voltage that the system is designed to serve our customers. As you can see here, it's dropping down to about 95 percent. That's starting to approach the point where, again, we're at risk of the voltage not being adequate for our customers' loads to be able to receive power from us and not be damaged themselves. If that gets much lower, we're at risk of damage to the equipment. But we want to take care of both those problems.

Also, again, this is the strong side of the source, because it's closer to the higher voltage lines. So even if we don't have a loss of the line that comes -- even if we don't have an outage of the line that comes out of this substation, the Scott County Substation, if we lose

one of the transformers that are there that steps the power down from the higher-voltage system to our 69 kV system, we have the other transformer overloading. As you can see here, it shows that the loading on that other transformer would be about 113 percent. Again, that's getting to the point where we're concerned about the risk of damage to our equipment and being able to maintain service to our customers.

So these are the issues that we're trying to solve by the problem -- the solution that we've got here. So, with that, we've come up with a solution; and we have demonstrated that solution of limiting overloads, as we'll be replacing the line with a stronger line, one that operates at a higher voltage and has a greater capability to carry power to our customers. It will improve the reliability. We'll be taking an older line and replacing it with a new line. So simply the fact that it's in better shape will make it a more reliable line as well. And it will provide sufficient transmission capability to allow this system, this area's loads to continue to grow.

Now I'll turn it back to Sage.

MS. TAUBER: Thanks, Paul.

Just a few more minutes here. I just wanted to introduce a couple of concepts that are in the route permit application. One thing we wanted to point out is that part of the route permit process through the Public Utilities Commission involves applying for what's described as a route width. So as you'll notice on the maps here in the front of the room, we're describing a route width within which the transmission line will be actually located. Sometimes this is confused with the right-of-way, which is the actual easement area that the utility company will acquire within which the transmission line is located.

So for the route permit process, rather than defining an actual alignment and actual pole location at the point of our route permit application, what we're applying for is approval from the Commission of a designated route width. That allows flexibility for the final design of the transmission line, which occurs after we receive approval from the Commission of the route width.

So in this case, for example, Xcel Energy is proposing a 200-foot route width for the areas of the transmission line that will be rebuilt in its current alignment and a 400-foot route width in

areas where we're proposing new construction. That allows for flexibility of the design and actual location of the poles once the final design occurs after the route permit is obtained. And in this particular schematic, you can see in this example there's the sewer main here (indicating), just to illustrate the idea that it allows the flexibility to design the actual centerline of the transmission line around any other types of constraints like other infrastructure, other sensitive resources, maybe significant trees or vegetation or other particular areas that require some flexibility in designing the actual line.

So, again, just to go back to our project overview map here real quickly. The segments that you see here in orange, this segment here, here, and here (indicating), is a 200-foot route width. And then the area shown in red, which are the new construction where there's currently no transmission line existing, which is this red line and the line right here (indicating) that goes into Chaska, we're requesting a 400-route width, again within which we can locate the actual right-of-way to do this -- the final alignment once we receive approval from the Commission.

Regarding the proposed structure types, these are the three structure types (indicating) -- again these photos are in the back of the room as well -- that we're proposing to use on this transmission line upgrade project. The majority of the structures would be one of these two structures (indicating). This one is a brace post structure (indicating). This one is a horizontal post structure (indicating).

The existing transmission line that you see in the area today is a combination of wood and steel poles. The areas where we would be upgrading and rebuilding the existing alignment, we would be moving to steel pole construction of either weathering -- self-weathering steel or galvanized steel, which is on the right. The difference is the self-weathering, as you can see, turns kind of a rust color, whereas the galvanized steel stays the shiny silver.

For the eastern portion of the project, which involves extending eastward across the Minnesota River, we're proposing to use a similar structures which exists now, which are the V-Frame structure shown on the far left there and potentially a Y-Frame structure, which I apologize,

it's not in this photo, but it's in the photo in the back corner of the room there.

The average height of the existing structures, this just shows a photo simulation of just a very general typical example. The photo there on the left shows a typical structure of what's existing there on the line now. The average height is around 60 feet. The height of the structures do vary based on the topography and the various engineering constraints of the area. The proposed structure, as we upgrade to 115-kilovolt transmission line, will be slightly taller, slightly larger base. On average between 10 to 20 feet taller, what you see on the example there on the right.

In regard to the anticipated schedule of the project, Bill will get into a little bit more of the discussion on the permit process; but once that process is complete, we expect to receive a route permit in the summer of 2013, next year, at which time we will finalize engineering design and begin construction the summer of 2013, with a projected in-service date of 2014, spring of 2014.

This is a general schematic showing the vegetation clearing that's required around

transmission lines for the safe maintenance and operation of the transmission line. It's a little bit detailed. We have this on a poster as well. And I think -- being mindful of the time, I think if there are questions about this later, we can talk more. But in general you can see that both construction and operation of the transmission line does require vegetation clearing around the transmission line and in the right-of-way to varying degrees. So you can see directly under the transmission line structure itself, which is referred to as the wire zone, is generally typically limited to grasses, low-growing vegetation. As they move away from the line, shrubs and low-growing trees are acceptable. And then, even outside of the easement, what we call the hazard wind zone, is where our vegetation maintenance crews will ensure that the vegetation, as you can see in this photo depicted by the dead tree there on the right, any of those trees that pose any sort of danger to the safe operation of the line would be removed. This is, again, just a very general, typical photo shown on the left before vegetation clearing and maintenance and the after photo on the right to show the clearing around the line, again, for safety in

operation reasons. Again, got just another photo typical.

And I don't want to take up too much time, but we do have a few photos just to kind of orient all of you to a few of the project areas.

I'll just flip through these quickly, Bill, if that's okay, just to kind of get you oriented about the areas we're talking about. And, again, we can look more specifically at the route maps in the front of the room at some of these areas.

This shows on the left-hand side of the road an existing 69 transmission line on the intersection of Guernsey Avenue and Highway 140, the line that would be converted from 69 to 115 with no physical change in the structures.

Again, an example of the existing structures in the area that would be upgraded where these structures would be replaced in approximately the same alignment.

Again, along Highway 212/140 overpass, this shows a good example of galvanized steel structures that are currently existing.

This is an example here at Creek Road where you can see the transmission line, the

existing line here as it traverses up the hill.

This is the line that goes through the neighborhood there on Cascade Drive and Tupelo Way. You can see a bit more modern, newer-type style of galvanized steel pole.

And the second -- and, I'm sorry, it got a little cut off there. The existing line again along Chaska Boulevard, and this is before current drought conditions. This is an example of where the line starts heading eastward across the Minnesota River, again at the eastern terminus of the project, to where it would connect to the Scott County Substation.

So, with that, I'll turn it back over to Bill. And, again, there's several of us here representing Xcel Energy and Great River Energy, and we're happy to answer any questions.

MR. STORM: Thank you, Sage.

And you do have a copy of the slides on the handout. I just want to do a quick run-through on what -- from a regulatory standpoint what the process is all about and who the players are involved.

As I said, Bill Storm, Department of Commerce Energy Facility Permitting. The ultimate

decision makers in these two dockets, the certificate of need docket and the routing docket, is the Public Utilities Commission. Those of us in our staff at the EFP, the Energy Facility Permitting Unit, we serve at the PUC's pleasure. We help them with the logistics, we hold the meetings, we help set up the public hearings, we do the notices for them, and we also do the environmental review. So I for this project will be writing the environmental review document for these two dockets, and I'll get into that a little bit later.

But you can see, the Public Utilities Commission is responsible for wind farms, pipelines, transmission lines, and power plants.

As I said, there's one project here, the rebuild of the 69 line to a 115 line. This one project has two dockets. The first docket before the PUC is the certificate of need. And this is the docket in which the Applicants have to show to the PUC that there is a need and that their solution, rebuilding of the 69 line, is the appropriate solution for that need.

The legis -- the statutes and the rules that cover the statutes define what projects are obligated to follow this process. And as you can

see, just taken from the statute, that a transmission line in excess of 100 kilovolts that is more than 10 miles long falls under the requirement for a certificate of need. And this project, indeed, meets that criteria.

On May 15th, 2012 Xcel and GRE submitted a certificate of need application to the Public Utilities Commission documenting their position about the need and the solution for the need. On August 21st, 2012 the Commission accepted the CN application as complete. What that acceptance means is that the document had all the pieces and parts in it that the statute and rules say that it has. It's not a judgment about whether they agree with those pieces and parts or the facts of those pieces and parts; it's just saying, okay, you provided us all the checkoffs that the statute and rule require so the process can begin.

In that process, part of the process for the certificate of need is an environmental document needs to be produced that evaluates the proposed project from a size, type, and timing standpoint, meaning transmission verse generation or generation verse transmission or 69 to 115 as opposed to 69 to 345. It looks at the issues surrounding the

solution to the need proposed by the Applicant and what are the environmental impacts of those issues. And that environmental document is prepared by the Department of Commerce EFP staff. So I will be producing an environmental document to deal with the issues surrounding the impacts on the need question.

In addition to there being an environmental document, a CN process also requires a public hearing. And the public hearing is held so the public can have another opportunity to speak on the project, the environmental report that was generated, and so forth.

This schematic just basically shows how -- the various milestones of that process, of the certificate of need process. And when you look at this and when I move on to the routing process, you'll see that some of these milestone blocks are similar. And what we do to create efficiencies in the process is we'll be combining some of them steps. And I'll talk about that in a second.

Again, the one project, two dockets. The first docket being the CN docket. The second docket being the routing docket. The routing docket is where we look at where should this line go. If, indeed, a line is the solution that the PUC agrees

with, where should that line go?

And, again, there are thresholds that require various projects to go through this process. And this project definitely meets those thresholds.

In the routing process, in statute and rule, there are two processes, the full process and the alternative process. This project is following the alternative process. The alternative process was established for smaller, less complex projects. A rebuild of this size is -- falls into that category. Both processes, whether it's a full process or the short process, require an environmental review document and a public hearing.

On July 11th, 2012 Xcel submitted an application to the PUC for a route permit. In that application, since they're going through the alternative process, which is a shorter process, they only need to put their preferred route on the table. If this was a larger project and we were going through the full process, they would have to put their preferred route plus an alternative route on the table. But since it's the alternative process, they only have to put one route on the table.

The application was put in July 11th. On

September 11th the Commission, after reviewing the application, determined that the application was complete. Again, just as with the CN application, completeness of review, it doesn't -- it's not a stamp of approval for the project or going to the merits of the facts of the application; it just is a statement that, yes, you've checked all the boxes and you included all the information that the rules say you need to include. The merits of that information get fleshed out as we move through the process.

So since we're following the alternative process, the application -- the Applicant only needs to put one route on the table. In this case the route they put on the table was centered around the existing 69 kV line. They have asked for a route width that's wider than the right-of-way existing 69 kV line, and that's to allow them to have flexibility if they come across something where a homeowner wants it -- let's say the current 69 line runs in front of their house between the house and the road and the homeowner for some reason, a stand of trees, wants to build a garage there, asks the Applicant could you move it behind my property, the wider width that the Applicant's asking for gives

them a little bit of flexibility to move that alignment. Now, the alignment is only the right-of-way. The right-of-way in this case is 75 feet. So even though they're asking for a route width of 200 or 400 feet, when it's all done and said, they're only going to acquire a right-of-way that's 75-feet wide.

Anyway, the alternative process, one alternative put on the table. A public information scoping meeting is held, and that's what we're doing today, is public information to let the public know about the project, let the public know about the process, and a scoping meeting.

As I said previously, the Applicant only needs to put one route on the table in a short process. But this scoping process, which is open until October 12th -- so if you have comments, get them to me by October 12th -- this scoping process is your opportunity to say, well, okay, that's all right, I see the logic in wanting to follow the 69 kV line; but, hey, that line was built in 1950; I think a better route is going another way, down some other property line or some other road. This is your opportunity to put forth that alternative. Say, look, I would like you, Bill, in your

environmental document to not only evaluate the impacts and the appropriateness of what the Applicants' proposing, but also look at the impacts of this other route that I've come up with, you know, and we'll do that. So even though the Applicant only has to have one route on the table, this scoping process is an avenue for local units of government or the public to put other alternatives to be evaluated and included in the mix.

In this process the environmental review document needs to be done. In the CN process the environmental review document is called an environmental report; and it looks at the project from a high elevation, what are the effects of transmission verse generation. The environmental review document in the routing process looks at low elevation; what is the impact of this specific route, what are the impacts on wetland and wildlife and homeowners and businesses on this particular route. So there will be an environmental review document for the routing process.

Once the environmental review document is complete, the next milestone, when you look at those charts, is the public hearing. The public hearing will be back in this area, will be noticed --

anybody who signs up on my project list will be noticed. It will be back in this area. There will be an administrative law judge who presides over this meeting, and this will be a way for the public to ask questions of the Applicant, ask questions of staff, either me or Mike, and also to inquire about the environmental document. If you have questions about the environmental document, that would be the time to get your comments on the record for that.

Once -- when we come back here after the environmental document's done -- it's out for public review for a week or so, two weeks, depending on what the timing is -- we come back here for the public hearing. The public gets to speak to the ALJ. There's also a comment period, a written comment period, open ten days after that where you get to submit comments to the ALJ on the alternative route you put on the table or any issues that you see.

Once that comment period closes for the public hearing, the ALJ then will make a report. He'll make a report -- he or she will make a report on the findings of fact, the record, and also their recommendations. And in this case a recommendation would be whether to grant -- whether there is a need

and whether to grant the need and how best to meet that need. He may say we agree with the preferred route that the Applicant has chosen and we think you should issue a route permit and the permit should have these conditions. So once the ALJ report comes back, I will -- I will assemble the record, and then the case is presented to the PUC. And the PUC is the ultimate decisionmaker. That meeting is also public and it will be noticed. Anybody who signs up on my list will get that, will get a notice of that meeting that's coming up. At that meeting is where the PUC, the five-member PUC, will make a determination on need and on routing.

The process for the CN is supposed to take about a year, and the alternative process on the routing has about six months. Those dates do slide a little bit, depending on the complexity of the project. This is a mile -- this shows the milestones for the routing process. You can see that there are some of these blocks -- when you take time to look at it, you'll see that some of these blocks are similar. Public meeting, public scoping, public hearing, so -- and the environmental documents.

EFP, our role in this thing from an

environmental review standpoint, is to look at the preferred route and any alternative routes that made it through scope, evaluate their impacts on the built, meaning the manmade environment, and on the the natural environment. I don't do that alone, though. I do coordinate my efforts with the Pollution Control Agency, the DNR, and other agencies around the state. So as I'm writing my environmental document, I am in communication back and forth with these other various agencies that have authority for public health and environmental welfare.

Now, as I said, one project, two processes. The two processes do have things that overlap; and in an effort to be more efficient, we're combining some of them processes. And this is just to say we're combining -- as I said, we need an environmental report for the CN and we need an environmental assessment for the routing. What I'll be doing is writing one report that incorporates the requirement for both those into one document. It's more efficient, saves time.

The same thing with the hearing. Both processes require public hearing. What we'll be doing is we'll be combining them into one public

hearing. Once the environmental document is released, we'll be back down here with an ALJ, administrative law judge, to have a public hearing.

Now, if you want to track information on these projects -- as I get public comments in from local units of government or from citizens or alternative routes proposed or the scoping document or the environmental document, anything that I produce or that I get relative to these two dockets we track on our website. The first website is the Energy Facility Permitting website. That's a website that we at Commerce maintain. And I will PDF all the pertinent documents and put them on that website so you can follow them, see what your neighbors are saying about the project, if they said anything, see what your local unit of government has said about the project. The scoping decision, when it comes out, will be there. The environmental report will be there. So that's how we track the project from the EFP standpoint.

There is an official tracking of the record which is done and maintained by the PUC, and that's called e-dockets. And that system is also on the web and the URL is there. And to documents when -- documents are placed on there also. To

track documents on there, if you go to the URL that's listed and then for the CN you enter the year, which is 11, and then you enter the case number, and for the routing, enter the year, which is 12, and the case number, and that will take you to that docket. And there are PDF linkable downloadable documents there.

Basically what this meeting tonight is about is to inform the public of the process, allow the public to have an opportunity to ask questions of the regulators and/or the Applicants. So what I'm going to do is, as I turn this over to you, I will ask, since no one filled out a card -- we have a small group here tonight -- just a show of hands if you want to speak, ask questions. We do have a court reporter to take your questions down to make sure it's in the record. If you don't feel like speaking now tonight or you want to think about some of the information you see on this and you want to get a comment to me on an issue that you want me to cover in the environmental assessment, the comment period closes on October 12th. So either email me or snail mail me your comments on that.

And, as I said, if you do want to speak, since we have a court reporter here, stand, state

and spell your name for her, and then ask your question; and I'll direct the question to the appropriate Applicant or the regulatory staff, depending on what the question may be.

Remember, October 12th get your comments in to me. I do appreciate you coming. If you have -- that's it for the formal presentation.

Does anybody have any questions of either the regulators or the Applicants?

Okay. Well, remember, if you think of something or if you speak to one of your neighbors when you get back and they have an issue that they want to make sure I cover -- let's say for an example that the existing transmission line goes through a fen or some other environmental area that people really treasure in this area and you want to make sure -- Bill, I want to make sure you assess an impact and see if it's appropriate for the new line to continue through there or should we go around it, get your comment to me by October 12th so that I can incorporate that into the scope, and then that could be incorporated into the environmental document.

If there are no questions, though, please feel free to look at the maps or informally ask questions.

But that will do it. Okay. Thank you.

(Proceedings concluded at 2:55 p.m.)